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10. BLOOD BORNE PATHOGEN MICROBES AND BIOTERRORISM

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ABSTRACT

Blood may be considered both a medicine and strategic material. In Croatia blood is collected on voluntary basis and undergoes an obligatory screening for blood borne pathogen microbes, including human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), Hepatitis B and C viruses. As a result of this screening, the risk of infection through exposure to blood and blood products has been markedly reduced, but not eliminated. There are possibilities, although very small, that an infected person (undetected as agent's carrier) could be a blood donor, or a blackmailer. In either case, this could create fear and be real threat to public health.

We studied two separate registers, the data concerning positive isolates of blood borne pathogens in the Croatian Institute for Transfusion Medicine and in confirmed cases reported to the National Infective Diseases Register. Over time, the incidence of blood borne infective diseases decreased. But since new pathogen microbes are emerging, this changing public health problem could be of particular interest to bioterrorism. Laboratory diagnostic procedures for prevention of blood borne pathogen microbes' transmission are discussed.

KEYWORDS

Blood, bioterrorism and preventive measures